

New Hampshire
State Board of Education
Minutes of the April 17, 2013 Meeting

Chairman Raffio welcomed Mayor Ted Gatsas and Dr. Tom Brennan to the Board meeting. Chairman Raffio asked for a moment of silence for the tragedy at the Marathon in Boston on Monday.

John Rist welcomed Board members to West High School. Mr. Rist, along with four students, toured the building and visited the NJROTC program classroom and saw some interactive technology that the Navy has provided. Mr. Rist, Acting Principal for Manchester West High School, introduced staff and presented a power point presentation on West High School. Mr. Rist said the school was established in 1922. There are 1,152 students and 125 teachers, 13% are EL Students and there are 165 students in NJROTC.

Manchester High School West's mission is to develop an impassioned, independent diverse world. There is a four year program in theatre and acting. The Manchester West dropout rate is the highest in the state. Despite this statistic, Superintendent Brennan said he is proud of the teachers and students and the incredible work they do and how involved everyone is. Mayor Gatsas said he is honored to have the Board in Manchester and for staff to have an opportunity to show what the district is doing.

Several teachers spoke regarding their schools: Chris Martin, Principal of Webster Elementary School, spoke about the Bring Your Own Device (BYOD) pilot program. There is 40 percent participation and the pilot program is in the fourth and fifth grades. Three students spoke on how they use this program in their classes. Principal Forrest Ramsdell from Parkside Middle noted that Parkside is a SIG school with an enrollment between 680 and 720 for grades 6 – 8. Laurie McIntire, who teaches eighth grade at Parkside, spoke about Project CRISS (Creating Independence Through Student-owned Strategies). The Parkside teacher evaluation process, required by SIG, was also presented. Matthew Murphy, teacher at Parkside, spoke about the success of the school's Positive Behavioral Intervention and Supports (PBIS) program. Robin Tate, Media Specialist, spoke about the technology in the schools.

Tim Soucy from the Manchester Health Department spoke about a Robert Wood Johnson Foundation funded project to create Community Schools. The City of Manchester has been awarded \$165,000 for the first year and selected three public elementary schools to pilot this project. They are Bakersville, Beech Street School and Gossler Park School. It is expected that this pilot program will meet the learning needs of neighborhood residents and bring their communities together regarding learning opportunities.

AGENDA ITEM I. CALL TO ORDER

The regular meeting of the State Board of Education was convened at 11:00 a.m. at Manchester West High School in Manchester. Tom Raffio presided as Chairman.

Members present: Tom Raffio, Cindy C. Chagnon, Gary W. Groleau, Helen G. Honorow, Gregory Odell, Emma Rous, and James C. Schubert. Also in attendance were Virginia M. Barry, Commissioner of Education, and Paul K. Leather, Deputy Commissioner of Education.

Chairman Raffio welcomed Emma Rous to the Board as a new Board member.

AGENDA ITEM II. PLEDGE OF ALLEGIANCE

The NJROTC presented the colors. Emma Rous led the pledge of allegiance.

AGENDA ITEM III. PUBLIC COMMENT

Lisa Drake, Jim O'Connell, and Lesley Wants spoke to the Board regarding their concerns about the Manchester School District, especially class size and improving public education in Manchester.

Peter Martin from Newport and from Exquisite Productions said that it is important to teach students how to study.

AGENDA ITEM IV. OPEN BOARD DISCUSSION

A. Update on Charter Schools – James Schubert reported that he had visited Mills Falls Charter School in Manchester on April 3rd and was impressed with the school, and how focused the students were on their studies. The charter school is K-6 and with twenty students in each classroom. Chairman Raffio said there are two charter schools on the consent agenda: Great Bay eLearning Charter School, which would like to add grade seven; and the Polaris Charter School, which would like to expand the number of their board. Chairman Raffio said that the State Board is in favor of the concept of charter schools. There are seventeen in operation and one more that will open in September. The Board has to make sure that in the finalized budget the state has included monies for new charter schools. Governor Hassan has included monies for a few additional charter schools, but the House version does not. This is a journey in the budget process.

After the budget has been approved the Board can then entertain applications for the new charter schools in the pipeline which have completed the application process. Also, it isn't just about the money for charter schools but there is a process of review by the Department.

B. Update on NH Department of Education ESEA Flexibility Waiver – Deputy Commissioner Leather reported that the waiver was submitted on Monday. The only significant change was in response to USDE demand for percentage of student growth in education evaluations. Commissioner Barry and he met with various groups for the final statement regarding “up to 20% for students growth.” The full waiver is posted on the website. Commissioner Barry said that the Task Force on Effective Schools has met for over three years. The Title I schools are the only ones involved in the waiver and there has not been any research to support a percentage. There are specific requirements for Title I schools. There will be a study to look at the impact the percentage will have on these schools. Commissioner Barry said there have been several calls with USDE and hoping we receive a call soon approving the waiver.

C. Update on Manchester School District – Chairman Raffio made the following statement regarding the Manchester School District:

“We know that the leaders of the City of Manchester want the best possible schools for their children. That’s a commitment we all share. It has become clear that concerns are being raised about the conditions in the Manchester School District. It is the responsibility of this Board, working with the Department of Education, to ensure that every student attends a school that complies with the state’s curriculum and educational standards. With that in mind, this Board will continue work in its advisory role with the Department of Education to address the issues in the Manchester schools.”

Deputy Commissioner Leather said the Department continues to meet with the administration in this district. Class size in the high schools is still a major concern and we are meeting with board members, the Superintendent and Assistant Superintendent as they do exceed the required size. As of yesterday on report of Assistant Superintendent Michael Tursi, 165 classes in the district do exceed minimum standards. The Department needs to work with the district and school board when the curriculum audit report is released in May regarding performance issues. The Department is looking at performance on annual assessments, as well as minimum standards compliance and continues to discuss this with the district. Ms. Honorow asked who performed the audit. It was CSMI. Ms Honorow expressed that there is a sense of urgency that outstanding issues be addressed.

Chairman Raffio said the concerns are not specific to just curriculum. Ms. Chagnon expressed concern that there is not enough bandwidth at some schools. Mayor Gatsas said the school board passed the budget unanimously but when he and Dr. Brennan met with the Aldermen they wanted to be more prudent and that the IT Department should request more funds from the state to leverage software. Mayor Gatsas said the school district has a 2.8 million dollar bond that will be used for technology and \$1.5 million for professional learning for teachers. They have also provided money in the budget for intercom systems in the schools to update safety in schools. The Mayor noted that there are 9,000 classes in the district, and although any class exceeding minimum standards is a concern, the current number needs to be taken in the context of the size of the district. These are trying times in Manchester and Manchester has more diversity than any other schools. Mayor Gatsas commended Commissioner Barry for the waiver process. Mayor Gatsas said that under the current federal accountability system 76% of schools are reported as failing. Some Manchester classes are over 30 students but other districts have the same problems as Manchester in terms of funding. Mr. Schubert expressed concern that the dropout rate has gone up, technology has been lost, and students are not being engaged to stay in school. Dr. Brennan said that there are different course offerings and other venues for students and that the district is meeting the needs of students. He commended Commissioner Barry and Deputy Commissioner Leather for all the help and guidance they have provided the Manchester School District.

D. Update on Unity – Judith Fillion introduced Jeff Blaney from the Department, Middleton McGoodwin, Superintendent of Schools for SAU #6, and Robert McDevitt, Member of the Unity School Board. Dr. Fillion reported that Mr. Blaney has been on site. Mr. Blaney said he had visited the site on April 11 and feels the architect is way over his head in this project. Mr. Blaney said that something major has to happen for this project to be finished and the school to open on time. Superintendent McGoodwin said he will have a Plan B ready in case the new school cannot open but he does not have a Plan B ready yet. Chairman Raffio said he wanted to see the Plan B at the May 15th State Board meeting. Superintendent McGoodwin said Plan B would include 120 Unity students. Mr. McGoodwin said that a Newport resident has given Unity \$200,000 towards this project. Mr. McDevitt said that there have been major changes and movement on construction. There is a new foreman in place. Mr. McDevitt had a question about building commissioning. Mr. Blaney said he would provide an excerpt from the “Manual for Planning and Construction of School Buildings.” Ms. Honorow said that the Fire Marshall also has to approve this new school before it can open and if Plan B has to be put in place it will be disruptive to students to start a new school year at one school and then have to move to the new school.

This needs to be a huge consideration in everyone's thinking and students should have the best school year they can have. Chairman Raffio said the Board expects weekly construction updates to be sent to Mr. Blaney.

AGENDA ITEM V. SPECIAL PRESENTATIONS

A. Lunch with students – Board members had lunch with Mayor Gatsas and students.

B. United States Senate Youth Program – Lori Temple said that in 1962 the United States Senate passed a resolution creating the US Senate Youth Program. This is a national initiative to provide a yearly opportunity for talented young people with demonstrated interest in public service to deepen their interest and understanding of America's political processes and encourage their commitment to political leadership. The 2013 Delegates are John Parsons, Oyster River High School; and Allison Thompson, Nashua High School South. Each student spoke of their experiences participating in the program's Washington Week. John Parsons attends Oyster River High School where he is the class of 2013 Vice President. In March 2012 John was elected as the student representative to the School Board. In this role he is open-minded and fair as he works diligently to represent the interests of the student body. John challenges himself in the classroom, the athletic field and service to his community. He plans to play a key role in local and state government that allows him to represent people as he has done in high school. Allison Thompson attends Nashua High School South where she has been a Class Officer for all four years. She was also the student representative on the School Futures Committee studying scheduling, graduation, and community service requirements. While balancing her extracurricular and athletic expectations she helped guide the committee. She is a highly respected member of the student body, highly regarded by the faculty and administration. Ali will be attending Wesley College in the fall.

C. Set Passing Score for Praxis II Exam in Mandarin – Judith Fillion introduced Virginia Clifford who explained that the Mandarin test is a new test to be added to the credentialing requirements for teaching Mandarin. The effect of this action will be to require the Praxis II in Mandarin for a candidate to receive the Mandarin endorsement. New Hampshire currently requires Praxis II content tests for many subject area credentials. Foreign languages are considered core content areas under NCLB. We prioritize those content areas as we add new tests for certification requirements. Mandarin is a small but increasing course offering in New Hampshire. Many of our candidates enter the profession through Alternative routes to certification. The exam will provide a measure of content knowledge that includes listening, reading, writing and speaking.

MOTION: Cindy Chagnon made the motion, seconded by Gary Groleau, that the State Board of Education adopt a passing score of 155 for the Praxis II in Mandarin. The test will be available for the purpose of demonstrating HQT immediately. It will also be used to measure content knowledge as part of the Alternate 4 or 5 routes to certification. The test will be required for the Mandarin endorsement beginning on July 1, 2014.

VOTE: The motion was adopted by unanimous vote of the Board present, with the Chairman voting.

Board members would like a review of this program in one year.

AGENDA ITEM VI. NEW DEPARTMENT BUSINESS

There was no New Department Business

AGENDA ITEM VII. LEGISLATIVE ISSUES

A. Final Proposal for Ed 321, School Building Construction and Ed 322, Regional Career and Technical Center and Charter School Leases – Judith Fillion and Jeff Blaney were there to answer any questions from Board members. Dr. Fillion said there are two changes in this final proposal. First, the Department shall encumber the full eligible amount of the grant in the fiscal year in which construction is expected to begin. Eighty percent of the estimated eligible grant shall be paid upon approval for payment by the Department. The balance of the total grant shall be paid upon completion of construction and verification by the Department; and second, the purpose of Ed 322 is to implement the provisions of RSA 198:15-hh relative to providing annual grants to meet the costs of leasing permanent space in buildings for regional career and technical centers that are used for the operation of high school career and technical education programs and charter schools. This funding will no longer be considered school building aid but will be called “school lease aid.” Paul Leather said a vote is needed by the Board to adopt the Final Proposal for Ed 321, School Building Construction and Ed 322, Regional Career and Technical Center and Charter School Leases. The Department has made changes to the Final Proposal in order to respond to comments from the staff attorney, who reviewed the rule for the JLCAR. The Final Proposal will be submitted to the JLCAR for its review. After a public hearing and approval by the JLCAR, the Board may then adopt the final rule at its next regularly scheduled meeting.

MOTION: Cindy Chagnon made the motion, seconded by James Schubert, that the State Board of Education adopt the Final Proposal for Ed 321, School Building Construction and Ed 322, Regional Career and Technical Center and Charter School Leases.

VOTE: The motion was adopted by unanimous vote of the Board present, with the Chairman voting.

AGENDA ITEM VIII. NEW BOARD BUSINESS

A. Priorities of State Board – Chairman Raffio reported on the following items:

1. The Board will not have a Board Retreat until after the charter school funding has been decided.
2. Board members like to visit school districts and to be involved with students.
3. The Con-Val busing issue has been resolved.
4. The State Teacher Policy Yearbook gave the Department of Education a C-. It is higher than the national average and New Hampshire is making progress. Commissioner Barry reported the teacher preparation programs made progress on the national report. She was pleased to announce New Hampshire was above the national average regarding changes in education preparation programs. She noted that the Educator Effectiveness Task Force and Professional Standards Board worked closely to support critical issues facing preparation programs and worked very closely with higher education to support the impact of the Professional Standards Board and the work that they did with the teacher leader preparation programs and the Council for Teacher Education. One of the major changes that we did this year which was really important was we are changing the composition of our Council for Teacher Education so every public and private preparation program in the state has a voice in the training of teachers and leaders. This is important for us because there had been a breakdown of communication between programs so ultimately it affects the approval process. The implementation of the Foundations of Reading Test required of early childhood, elementary, reading specialists working with early childhood, both undergraduate and graduate level, is now required. The assessment ensures that they are able to teach reading both in the art of reading but the science of how children learn to read.

Commissioner Barry said that those changes that the Board supported in the last couple of years have been important for the state but the impact on the teacher preparation programs have been really significant. Tom Schram from UNH who is representing the higher education institutions is planning on attending a Board meeting.

5. The Federal law regarding International Studies has expired and was not put forward in Congress. He sent a letter to the Congressional Delegation regarding international studies.

6. The NH Association for Middle Level Education will be having the annual NH Scholar Leader Dinner on May 30th at The Center of New Hampshire. Cindy Chagnon and James Schubert will be attending from the Board.

7. There have been conversations with Manchester regarding the situation there.

8. The NH Coalition for Business and Education meeting will be held tomorrow, April 18. Commissioner Barry and Deputy Commissioner Leather, Gary Groleau, and Fred Kocher are involved in this meeting.

B. Education Reform

This item was not discussed at this meeting.

AGENDA ITEM IX. COMMISSIONER'S REPORT

Commissioner Barry reported on the following items:

1. Some of you may be aware that about a year ago we started having meetings with the Senate Education and House Education Committees. They actually were at first all day meetings to help both committees to understand what we are trying to do in education. Recently, the Department has been working really hard and if we ever do get our retreat we will discuss items. We presented a model that focused on communication, increased collaboration and coherence. We discussed New Hampshire college and career readiness standards to help to explain how we "New Hampshireized" the common core. We analyzed the Common Core and tried to compare our previous standards with the common core standards looking at college and career ready standards and then based this work we developed New Hampshire career and college readiness standards. We have a new person in the Department – Scott Mantie – who presented on assessment and Smarter Balanced.

Also, we talked about safety. This is an important issue for the House. We were joined by Perry Plummer, the new Director of Homeland Security, and Jeff Blaney. They did a presentation about a survey that has been ongoing initiated by Emergency Management. All schools participated in an extensive survey that helped identify any concerns.

We received a wonderful letter from the Chair of House Education, Rep. Mary Gile, expressing gratitude for the time and commitment to continuous improvement of education in our state.

In an effort to improve communication we are working closely with our superintendents, principals and teacher unions. Paul Leather reported on the minimum standards committee meeting. The committee is completing the initial proposal to be brought to the Board at the next meeting. Eight years ago, the Board held five public hearings around the state for the current update. This year's hearing schedule will be decided at the May Board meeting.

2. Mr. Leather said the NH State Dropout Prevention and Recovery Council held a meeting with the Superintendent, Principal and staff of Manchester School of Technology regarding the District's rise in dropouts this last year. MST will be presenting at the May meeting regarding their first year as a four-year high school, seeking resolution of their conditional approval status.

3. Mr. Leather referenced potential changes in the Board's authority, essentially prohibiting the State Board from chartering new schools for the next biennium as worded in HB 2.

AGENDA ITEM X. OLD BUSINESS

There was no Old Business at this meeting.

AGENDA ITEM XI. CONSENT AGENDA

A. Minutes of March 20, 2013 Meeting

MOTION: Cindy Chagnon made the motion, seconded by Gregory Odell, to approve the Minutes of March 20, 2013.

VOTE: The motion was adopted by unanimous vote of the Board present, with the Chairman voting.

B. Re-Appointments to Nonpublic School Advisory Council – A vote is needed to approve the Commissioner's re-appointment of four members to the Nonpublic School Advisory Council. The Council consists of 21 members, 11 of which have representatives of nonpublic schools, 8 are state agency employees, and 2 are interested citizens appointed by the Commissioner. These four members have remained active the past three years and would like to continue to serve on the Council. The four members are: William Bennett, Director, New England Association of Schools and Colleges; Douglas Cummings, Director, Independent Schools Association of Northern New England; David Parker, Director, Parker Academy; and Trudy Wright, Superintendent, Seventh Day Adventist Schools of New England.

MOTION: Gary Groleau made the motion, seconded by Gregory Odell, that the State Board of Education approve the Commissioner's re-appointment of William Bennett, Douglas Cummings, David Parker, and Trudy Wright to the Nonpublic School Advisory Council for a three-year term effective June 30, 2013 through June 30, 2016.

VOTE: The motion was adopted by unanimous vote of the Board present, with the Chairman voting.

C. Approval of Charter School Amendment Addition of Grade Seven Great Bay eLearning Charter School – A vote is needed by the Board to approve the addition of grade seven to the existing grade levels that are currently served at the Charter School. The grade expansion will not result in an increase of enrollment numbers that has been anticipated for charter school funding. By adding seventh grade, it would give the Charter School greater potential to reach 170 students and to further develop their middle school community.

MOTION: Cindy Chagnon made the motion, seconded by James Schubert, that the State Board of Education authorizes the Great Bay eLearning Charter School to add grade seven to their existing grade levels.

VOTE: The motion was adopted by unanimous vote of the Board present, with the Chairman voting.

D. Approval of Charter School Amendment Additional Board Members (Nine) - Polaris Charter School – Susan Hartford was present to answer any questions Board members had. A vote is needed by the Board to approve a nine member board (from 7 members to 9 members) at the Polaris Charter School. In addition to increasing the number of Board members, this action requests the elimination of categorical designations for the Board. In accordance with RSA 194-B:5, Polaris will be governed by a Board of up to nine members responsible for oversight of the operations of the charter school. The board's specific mission is to review all policies, hiring, and practices and insure that all reflect the mission and vision of the charter school. The trustees will represent diversity of stakeholders and contributors.

MOTION: Cindy Chagnon made the motion, seconded by James Schubert, that the State Board of Education authorize the Polaris Charter School to add two Board members (seven to nine) to its Board of Trustees and eliminate categorical appointments.

VOTE: The motion was adopted by unanimous vote of the Board present, with the Chairman voting.

AGENDA ITEM XII. OTHER BUSINESS

Chairman Raffio said he and Deputy Commissioner Leather had met with the Oversight Committee for Charter Schools. Concerns from Board members were expressed regarding charter school funding. Commissioner Barry said we are waiting to see what happens with the budget, and let's just say hypothetically, we would have the funding for two programs. At that point, we'd go to Washington to our representatives. Yes, there is a danger of losing the federal money because of the draw down. In the proposal we submitted two programs a year over the entire period. Given the fact that we have eighteen programs hoping that we would be approving more that we will try to see if we can get an extension on that but Roberta has been told that we can reapply for the money that we previously lost when we didn't open as many as we had put in the original project. So we will reapply if that is the case. It is a draw down process. If you don't draw down a certain amount of money they can take it back.

AGENDA ITEM XIII. TABLED ITEMS

There were no Tabled Items at this meeting.

AGENDA ITEM XIV. NONPUBLIC SESSION

The Board did not go into Nonpublic Session at this meeting.

AGENDA ITEM XV. ADJOURNMENT

MOTION: Helen Honorow made the motion, seconded by Cindy Chagnon, to adjourn the meeting at 1:40 p.m.

VOTE: The motion was adopted by unanimous vote of the Board present, with the Chairman voting.

Virginia M. Barry

Secretary